

4445 f 14

4445 f 14

5.
*Ecclesiastical Merchandise shewn to be unlawful, and exceedingly
injurious to the Church of CHRIST;*

5
With a brief Remark on the prevailing SIN of BRIBERY:

I N A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
Archdeacon's VISITATION in *Sudbury*, SUFFOLK,
MAY 25, 1769.

Published at the REQUEST of the
ARCHDEACON and some of the CLERGY.

By HENRY CROSSMAN, M. A. R
Rector of *Little Cornard*, SUFFOLK.

L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by J. and W. OLIVER, in Bartholomew - Close;
Sold also by Mr MERRILL at Cambridge, Mr FLETCHER at Oxford,
Mr GREEN at Bury, and Mr KEYMER at Colchester.

M DCC LXIX.

[Price One Shilling.]



JOHN II. 16.

Make not my Father's House an House of Merchandise.

WHEN our blessed SAVIOUR went up to the Temple, as his Custom was, at the Hour of Prayer, to teach the People, and to join in the public Devotions, he found there, in a Precinct or Court of it, *those that sold Oxen and Sheep and Doves, and the Changers of Money sitting, as in a Market-place: Upon seeing this, he was moved with Indignation, so that he made a Scourge of small Cords, drove them all out of the Temple, and the Sheep and the Oxen; and poured out the Changers Money, and overthrew the Tables: And said unto them that sold Doves, Take these Things hence; Make not my Father's House an House of Merchandise.*

In a manner somewhat similar to this, do the Children of this World still profane the Sanctuary of the LORD, whose Hearts, while they are present in our religious Assemblies, *go after their Covetousness*, and their Thoughts are taken up with the Care of their Merchandise, Farms and Cattle, when they ought to be employed in the Exercise of Godliness, about heavenly Things.

Yet this is not the Point I mean to dwell upon; it is a Crime of a more heinous and aggravated Nature: it is making a Traffic with holy Things and Places, and of those Endowments which have been annexed and devoted to them, for the Support of a Christian Ministry, even unto the End of the World.

We have frequently seen (tell it not to Posterity; publish it not in the Chronicles of *Great Britain!*) Advertisements of *Living wanted with immediate Resignation; Livings to be sold with an old Incumbent, &c.* They have stood ranked in the Columns of our weekly Journals, among Farms and Houses, Shops and Mercantile Wares. Now, if to buy and sell Cattle, and other Goods in the Jewish Temple, was an Act so unbecoming and provoking, that our LORD punished it with his own Hand;

surely, in the Christian Church, to buy and sell, in the manner here mentioned, the Houses of God, and the Possessions appertaining to them, must be a far greater Provocation, and more obnoxious to the Scourges of Heaven.

Had our SAVIOUR been upon Earth in these Days, would he not have severely rebuked these Traders in spiritual Things? Would he not have spoken to them in his Wrath, in these or the like Words, "Do not so wickedly. *Make not my Father's House an House of Merchandise.*

In the following Discourse I purpose to consider,

The Origin of Ecclesiastical Endowments, Benefices and Advowsons, with the Nature and Intent of Patronage.

And then to shew the Unlawfulness and pernicious Consequences of the general Practice of selling and buying, or holding Benefices in Trust. I say, the general Practice; for I do not mean to censure the selling Advowsons to Colleges in our Universities, or into any other Hands, where they may continue in Mortmain; because by so doing, the Evils here complained of, are totally and for ever prevented.

This premised, I proceed to treat of the several Points proposed.

First, Of the Origin of Ecclesiastical Endowments, Benefices and Advowsons, with the Nature and Intent of Patronage.

At the Beginning of the Gospel Age, although none of the Princes of the Earth espoused its Cause, or encouraged its Propagation, yet the Munificence and Liberality of the People to their Ministers was very great; and perhaps their voluntary Contributions often exceeded what the Tenth would have been, if it had been paid to the full. But upon the spreading of Christianity, a more fixed and settled Maintenance was requisite: And when the Gospel had been preached, and a Church widely planted in this Nation, some *Saxon* Monarchs possessing all the Lands of *England* in their own Right, conferred upon the Church the Tithes of the whole Kingdom by Royal Charter: And this was done before *Parochial* Divisions were made, and *Parochial* Churches, especially in the Country, were built; and the Bishops had their Colleges of Presbyters and Deacons usually living with them, all together at the See of the Diocese. Accordingly the Revenues of the Church were at first assigned to

to the Care and Disposal of each Bishop in his Diocese, and such Portions of them, as he judged proper, were distributed to the several Priests and Deacons under him, who were sent out by him, and from his See occasionally, (as Missionaries are abroad) to minister in holy Things, as Convenience offered in Town and Country, without any fixed Parochial Cure, or fixed Place of Residence. At the same time whatever Manors or Estates were granted by the Princes to any Thanes or Officers, or others, they were all subjected to the Payment of Tithes, before demised to the Church; and still to the Bishops were left the Appointments and Maintenance of the Clergy out of the Sum of the Revenues in their Hands. This was the first State of Things. But in Process of Time, as Christians multiplied in the Country, as well as in Towns, the People, and the great Men their Lords, became desirous of fixed Pastors among them, and of Churches to be appropriated to them in their several Districts: This produced a Zeal in the Rich and Honourable to build Churches on their Estates for the Benefit of their Tenants, and to build also *Manfes* or *Houses* for Ministers to reside in, annexing to them certain Lands out of their Manors by way of Glebe. And in return for such Benefactions as these to the Church, the Bishops often gave to the Founders of them a Privilege of nominating or recommending fit Persons to officiate in the new Churches. This was the Original of *Advowsons* or *Patronages* in the Owners of such Estates as those before mentioned, and likewise of local Benefices, (as they are now called) which afterwards became Parochial, as the Bounds of Parishes became gradually formed and settled. In this manner then arose both Advowsons and Benefices, but the latter were totally independent of the Patrons, as to the *Rights* and *Revenues*: And indeed the Patrons here, in those Days, whatever was done by some others abroad, had seemingly no sort of Disposition to encroach, by Virtue of their Advowsons, upon the established Endowments of Benefices, being satisfied fully with the honourable Privilege of *nominating* to the Bishop, or recommending Clerks for the Possession and Enjoyment of them. They well knew, that the Tenure, by which they held their own Lands, was without the least Exemption from Tithes of any kind, and so they were transmitted down from one Generation to another, with no more Right or Claim in Patrons to the *Tenth* Produce of their Lands, than the Church had to the other nine Parts. And thus all their proper Concern in Benefices was then, and long afterwards, to present:

present fit Persons, on every Emergency, to do the Work of the Ministry, and to protect them in the Enjoyment of the several Rights, Dues, and Customs allotted to their Office; for which Reason they have obtained the Name of *Patrons*.

Now if these Possessors of Lands, at any time, seize on the Revenues of the Church; if they sell them as their own private Property, or require a valuable Consideration for the Tithes, on the Nomination of every Minister, they turn Pyrates in Effect, abuse their sacred Trust, and become guilty of notorious Injustice and Oppression. What? Shall a Guardian make a Prey of the Portion and Inheritance of the Fatherless and the Widow? Is a Trustee to enrich himself out of any pious or charitable Donation? Was a Door-keeper, or other Officer in the House of the LORD, to sell any of the Utensils or Ornaments belonging to it, would he not be apprehended and punished for the Sin of Sacrilege? Yet the Crime committed, as the Injury done, is but inconsiderable, in comparison of theirs, who make Sale of the *Lands* and *Endowments* appertaining to these holy Places. *They* are guilty of the grievous Sin of Sacrilege; Sacrilege in an high Degree, by taking away, or exacting a Price for that, which has been dedicated for Ages to the Service of GOD, and the Support of the Altar. This, as the Scriptures inform us, is *robbing of God*. *Will a Man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In Tithes and Offerings, saith the Lord, Mal. iii. 8.* Ye have made a Gain of hallowed Things; ye have rejected, and deprived my faithful Priests of their Portion; ye have bartered it away to those, who would *serve your Gods, and worship the golden Image that ye have set up. Ye are cursed with a Curse.* A dignified Writer, in his Day †, has been very large in enumerating Instances, wherein a Blasting and a Curse have pursued those Laymen, who retained Impropriated Tithes in their Possession. Let Observation now be made, whether the Names of such Patrons, as have corruptly separated, and sold Benefices from their Estates, remain and continue in their Dwelling Places, like theirs, who have not done the accursed thing. Are not most of them extinct? Have they not generally perished with the Money they have extorted from these Gifts of GOD? Perhaps there may be no Case wherein a well-known Remark has been more frequently verified than in this;

Non malè quæsitis succedit tertius hæres.

Very

† SIR HENRY SPELMAN.

Very iniquitous are those Methods practised by Patrons, to lead young, unwary, or necessitous Clergymen *into Temptation and a Snare*; requiring of them a Bond or a Promise, (or which has a more plausible Appearance, trusting to their Honour) to resign at Pleasure; to resign to a Son, when he shall arrive at a proper Age; to Children now Infants, to Children yet unborn. I would ask any Patron, *by what Authority dost thou these Things? and who gave thee this Authority?* It cannot be *from Heaven*, because it hinders the Success and Propagation of the Gospel, and leads to a *Multitude of Sins*. It cannot be *of Men*, because no such Power was ever granted by those Monarchs, who established the Laws of Tithes, nor by any of the Nobility and Gentry, who built and endowed Churches. And in the succeeding Reigns, especially since the Reformation, all venal Arts in spiritual Things have been prohibited by the Laws of the Realm, in the most full and absolute Terms. In the Sale of Estates, the Right of Nomination to a vacant Benefice, was, I believe, hardly ever accounted at any Price, till of late Years. *Freely ye have received, freely give*, is to be deemed the original Charge to every Patron. The Estate and the Trust were designed, and ought to be inseparable. *What the Providence of God, and the Piety of our Ancestors have joined together, let no Man put asunder*. We are told, that “in Spain and some other Countries, no Patron can alienate an Advowson, but by selling the Manor to which it belongs; and still, by our Law, if the Lord of a Manor grants to another Person his Manor, *cum pertinentiis*, the Advowson or Patronage of any Church or Churches appendant to that Manor, passes to the Purchaser or other Grantee, though there be no express mention of the Advowson*.” It is quite consonant to the Nature and Design of Patronage, that the Revenues of every Church should be sheltered under the Protection of some Person, or Persons of Rank or Fortune, who may be able to defend its Rights against the Attempts of Libertines, or Infidels in Masquerade. But to separate, as many have done, a Benefice from the Estate or Manor to which it was appendant, and to make Sale and Advantage of it, in the current Way, is an Act of Violence, of Avarice, and Extortion.

Patronage is a Confidence reposed by God and our Forefathers in the Heirs of, or Successors to such an Estate or Manor, as often as Need shall require, to make Choice of, and present to the Bishop, fit and able Men, to serve in that Place or Parish, in the Administration of God's Word.

* Clergyman's *Vade Mecum*. WATSON's *Compl. Incumb.*

Word and Sacraments; Men, who by the Purity of their Doctrine and the Innocency of their Lives, are most likely to promote the Glory of their Maker and Redeemer, and to set forward the Salvation of the Souls committed to their Charge. This is all the Power and Privilege with which any Patron was originally invested: And an important Trust it is, to look out for worthy Ministers, duly qualified, to discharge the most weighty Office Man can be called unto; namely, "To be Messengers, " Watchmen, and Stewards of the LORD; to teach and to premonish, " to feed and provide for the LORD's Family; to seek for CHRIST's " Sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his Children, who are in the " midst of this naughty World, that they may be saved for ever through " CHRIST." *Office of Ordination of Priests.*

But, O ye Patrons and Patronesses, who make a Market of your Benefices, how have you executed the high Trust reposed in you? Have you shown a due Regard to the Charge laid upon you by Almighty God, and your pious Predecessors? Have you shown a dutiful Respect to the Laws of your Country, and the Welfare of that Church, of which you profess to be Members? You call yourselves *Christians*, but ask your Consciences, if you have not miserably tarnished that amiable Character? Does it admit of one Moment's Doubt, whether you love the World more than CHRIST? Whether you are the Servants of GOD, or the Servants of Mammon? Can you either in public, or in your private Closets presume to mock your heavenly Father with this Address, "Thy " Kingdom come," when, instead of adding to and enlarging, you have set your Hands to the weakening and subverting the very Foundations of CHRIST's Church? The Glory of God, and the Honour of Religion, you have shewn to be of little Esteem in your Sight; nor have you entertained a tender, paternal Care and Thought, about the eternal Happiness and Salvation of your Neighbours. You may stifle these Convictions for a while, and drown them in Company, or the Amusements of human Life; but know of a Surety, that there will come a Day, when you shall be called to give an Account of your Stewardship, and stand before your SAVIOUR's Judgment-seat, there to answer, not only for the common Errors and Miscarriages of your Lives, but for Unfaithfulness, and the Abuse of a very important Trust; for the Sins of Simony and Sacrilege; and for the unspeakable Damage you have done to the Souls in that Parish, of which you have been, not *the Patrons*, but
the

the Betrayers, by *covenanting* for a Sum of Money, to *deliver them* into the Hands of mere Hirelings, instead of committing them to the Care of faithful and true Pastors.

Thus, alas! have Numbers of Advowsons eloped, or rather been drawn away by the Power of Gold, from their old Masters, and devoured by Strangers. Next Avoidances are jobbed about, and transferred from one to another, like Bank Notes or mortgaged Tenures. And is there no Remedy? Can no Expedient be thought of to recover and restore these strayed Benefices, if not to their former Heritage, yet to their primitive Freedom? Is there no Fund of public Treasure appropriated to the Benefit of the Church, which might be employed in the Purchase of them, without Prejudice to, and after the Death of the present Incumbents; putting them under the Royal Protection, or vesting them in some worthy Society; at least in such Hands, as would be likely to dispose of them according to the Appointment and Intention of the first Founders?

But I proceed in the next Place to shew the Unlawfulness and pernicious Consequences of the present Practice of buying, or holding Livings in Trust.

A Father, they say, is bound to provide for his Son; (is there no other Way than by thrusting him into the Ministry?) A Living is purchased, or one, in the Gift of the Family, held in Trust for him. The Minor, *nolens, volens, Lignum aut Mercurius*, must be trained up for Holy Orders. Having passed through the usual academical Forms of Discipline, and arrived to a proper Age, he applies for Admittance to the Ministerial Function, and is brought, too often, under the sad Necessity of *Lying to the Holy Ghost, Lying unto God*. For in the Ordination Service, the very first Question the Bishop puts to each Candidate is this? "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this Office and Ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his Glory and the edifying of his People?" *i. e.* Do you steadfastly believe, that the Holy Spirit of God, *who worketh in us both to will and to do*, hath wrought in you a real Inclination and Liking to the Work of the Ministry, above all other Employments? Is it the sincere Desire you have, to labour in the LORD's Vineyard, and to be instrumental to

the Enlargement of his Kingdom, that principally moves you to undertake this sacred Function? To which every Person to be ordained answers, "I trust so." But can the Youth, without *an horrible Dread overwhelming him*, make this Answer, who is conscious that he goes into Holy Orders, only for the sake of a Benefice that is bought or held for him? Can any one say this, in the Presence of God and the Congregation, and immediately receive the blessed Sacrament upon it, who knows himself to be so far from liking, or desiring to be a Minister of the Gospel, that if he had his Choice, and as good an Income, he had rather been destined to any other Profession in the World?

Again; Shall a Servant or Minister of the Lord Jesus, set out in a manner like those audacious Harpies, who, to get a Livelihood, engage in a contraband, illicit Trade, to the Discouragement and great Injury of the fair upright Dealer, and in open Defiance of all Authority? Surely, as our Religion teaches us, it is the Duty of every Christian especially of a Christian Minister, to obey, and be subject to the Laws and Ordinances of that Country to which we belong. But, that the common Practice of buying, or contracting for Preferments in any way, is an open Violation of the Laws of this Realm, will appear to every one, who reads over the Statute made in the 31st of *Q. Elizabeth* against "giving any Sum of Money, Reward, Gift or Benefit, directly or indirectly, or making any Promise, Grant, Bond, or Covenant, or other Assurance, in order to obtain any Benefice with Cure of Souls," styling this, "a corrupt taking, seeking, or accepting such Benefice."

Or that in the 12th of *Q. Anne*, which is as peremptory and express as Words can be, prohibiting the Purchase of, or the making "any Promise, Agreement or Covenant, to procure the next Avoidance of, or Presentation to any Benefice with Cure of Souls, declaring, that such Agreement shall be deemed and taken to be, a Simoniackal Contract."

And our Church in her XLth Canon pronounces the buying and selling of Livings, and Ecclesiastical Preferments, to be "the detestable Sin of Simony, and execrable before God."

A Clerk agreeing with a Patron to exempt *him* or his Tenant from paying Tithes is confessedly guilty of Simony; and there have been formerly very severe Prosecutions upon the above Acts for this Offence: then certainly, to agree to give to a Patron, for a Presentation, a Sum
of

of Money, which is of the like or greater Value upon the Whole, must be accounted as gross Simony, and equally deserves Deprivation of a Benefice so corruptly obtained.

But has not the Purchase of an Advowson been always esteemed lawful? I answer: Did ever any private Purchaser expend such a Sum of Money merely to dispose of the Benefice, to the Glory of God, and the Edification of his People? Is not the Intention in this, the same as in the Purchase of other Estates, to enlarge his own and his Family's worldly Interest, void of any Regard to the Interest and Welfare of CHRIST's Kingdom? With respect to the Intention of the Laws, and the Injury done to the Church, (from whence we must form our Judgment) such a Purchase cannot be less criminal, than the Purchase of a next Turn. The buying of the one, is in order to procure the other. It is a Contract made with the Patron to procure, or obtain of him the next Presentation. The *Cause and Consideration* are plainly *corrupt* in the very Sense and Meaning of the Statute. So that if a Clergyman, or any one for him, with his Knowledge and Consent, purchases Preferment at all, he is, without doubt, involved in great Guilt. Let any one shew me, by sound Argument, how there is worse Traffic in a Man's buying the next Avoidance only; than in purchasing a perpetual Advowson, to secure the next Turn to himself, and then selling it for as much or more than it cost him. O this is brave Trading! The Mischiefs arising from hence are of longer Continuance, and therefore this is a more pernicious Practice than the other. A next Avoidance may be bought, and when it returns to the Patron, it may please God to alter his Mind, that he may never do the like any more: Or his Successors may prove honest, conscientious Men, and faithful Trustees to the Church of CHRIST. But an Advowson once sold, is gone for ever: The Benefice is taken away from its proper Patron, and doomed to perpetual Vassalage; to serve the Purposes of a shrewd Merchant, and be marketted about from Generation to Generation.

I now pass on to consider the Unlawfulness and bad Consequences of bargaining for, or holding Livings in Trust for others, and only for a Season.

An Agreement to yield up a Benefice hereafter, in order to obtain a Term of Years in it, is as much an Act of Traffic, and a corrupt Cause,

as the actual buying a Presentation, or agreeing to exempt the Patron from paying his Portion of Tithes. Here is given him as valuable a Consideration *à posteriori*, and indirectly, as any Purchaser would have agreed directly for: From the Time that the young Person, to whom a Resignation of the Living is expected, enters upon it, to the Time of *his* Death, who held it for him; so many Years Profits does that Clergyman give up, as a Reward to the Patron for granting him a Term in it. Now to seek, or accept a Living, to resign at Pleasure, is on all Hands allowed to be Simony; and to take a Living on Condition of resigning it to a Minor, as soon as it shall be required, what is that but to resign at the Patron's Pleasure, and for his Benefit? A Bond, or a Covenant, at least a Promise of Resignation is made: A Gift or Reward, the very thing he desires above all others, is agreed for, and given at the Time appointed; although the Letter of both the Statutes is full and express, against Promises, Assurances, or any sort of Compacts; and against all Rewards and Gifts, indirectly as well as directly, and so is the Oath against Simony, of which more hereafter. There is not any Branch of Ecclesiastical Commerce that does more Hurt to the Flock and Kingdom of CHRIST, than this of holding Livings in Trust; a Condition, which no Patron has a Right to stipulate for, and which, it is a great Weakness as well as Wickedness, in any Clergyman to comply with.

To be the Dupe of a Church-factor, to be content with its Endowments, till a Son is able to receive them, or a Daughter of Years sufficient to gain a Clerical Husband; to wait, by Consent, the Opportunity of some senior Fellow in a College, and to give up the Living when another of equal or greater Value can be added to it: To be bound to pay an Annuity to a Widow or whole Household; to be instituted and dubbed Rector, while a Lay-patron, unqualified for Holy Orders, retains, by Virtue of a private Bargain, the whole Revenues, save only a small Stipend. O how can Men of a liberal Education; Men who profess the Religion of JESUS CHRIST; Men who have attained to the Dignity of the Christian Priesthood, debase themselves after this manner, and truckle to such Abominations!

They, moreover, expose themselves to very great Temptations; secretly to wish for the Death or Miscarriage of the Person for whom they hold Preferment; or to refuse Resignation, notwithstanding their solemn Covenants and Obligations. Sad Dilemma this! Either to starve or act the

Part

Part of a Knave: To turn out of House and Possessions with a Wife and Family, or undergo the Censures of the Law, and the Miseries of a Prison.

Dreadful, on many Accounts, are the Effects of this spiritual Traffic: The Number of Candidates for Holy Orders decreases annually, and will decrease more and more. The Expence of purchasing Preferment, added to that in the University (so much heightened of late Years) is a Burden too great for a moderate Fortune to bear. And the Students that are, too often grow careless of their Morals, and remiss in their Application to Letters, knowing that their Success in the World depends *not* upon their Learning, or Merit, or good Behaviour, but that a Living is bought, or held in commendam for them. Good Ministers, faithful Labourers, are discouraged and faint: They sow where they never reap: They plant Vineyards, but eat not of the Fruit thereof: They feed the Flock of CHRIST, but eat not of the Milk of the Flock. Unexperienced, if not irreligious, and immoral young Men succeed to the Rule and Revenues of the Church, who had need have somebody to watch over themselves; and who by the Levity and Incongruity of their Dress, seem as if they were ashamed of the Function they have undertaken; choosing rather to appear like Gentlemen or Merchants, than in the grave Habit, and with the distinguishing Tokens of Clergymen. Add to all this; that usually, among them who have bought Preferment, the principal Concern is to make the most of their Purchase, and waving all other Considerations, to turn it as much as possible to their temporal Advantage; so that in almost every Church obtained by Purchase, even those which are endowed with a yearly Income of some Hundreds, Divine Service is performed only once in a Day, and on the other Part of the Holy Sabbath, the People are left to do *their own Ways and find their own Pleasure*: They wander about *as Sheep that have no Shepherd*: Some take Refuge in a Conventicle, others in a Tabernacle, and others flee to Houses of public Resort: And some, perhaps for want of seasonable Reproof, and Instruction in Righteousness, go in the broad Way that leadeth to Destruction.

The Lambs of CHRIST are quite forgotten: The Souls of his little Children starve and languish for want of that Food which our pious Mother the Church has ordered to be dispensed to them. There is no Thought, nor in this Situation any Opportunity, of attending to one of the most beneficial Offices of our Ministry, that of *Catechising*. No wonder that Rebellion and Faction lift up their Heads again, assuming the specious Name of Liberty: No wonder that God is blasphemed, and
Ma-

Magistracy insulted : No wonder that such a general Corruption of Faith and Manners prevails among all Ranks and Degrees of Men, when they have not been trained up in the Fear of God, in the Duties of Honour and Obedience to the King, and to them in Authority under him; nor taught to *lead quiet and peaceable Lives*, according to the Precepts of the Gospel. Mark the Consequences : If the salutary Method of Catechising the Youth be neglected, Mankind will, in Proportion to this Neglect, grow worse and worse; Vice will take Root and flourish exceedingly; Irreligion and Infidelity will shout and triumph. In a word, where is it seen, that they, who have gained their Preferments by Purchase or by Compact, take the like Care to discharge the Pastoral, or even legal Duties of a Parish, as those do, who come into the Church with a right Intention, and in an honourable Way?

But the greatest Offence is still behind : Although it is undeniably evident, that in the Sense of all our Laws, the Words *Simony* or *Simoniacal*, signify “ a *corrupt* Contract made with the Patron : Covenanting with him for a Sum of Money ; giving him a Promise, or intelligible Assurance of some valuable Consideration, in order to obtain a Presentation of him.” Yet—*horresco referens* !—The Man of God who has done, or been privy to the doing some or other of these things, comes before the Bishop, comes into his Maker’s Presence, lays his Hand upon the Holy Bible, and deliberately takes the following Oath * : “ I do swear, that I have made no Simoniacal Payment, Contract or Promise, directly or indirectly, by myself or by any other to my Knowledge, or with my Consent, for or concerning the procuring or obtaining of this Living; nor will at any time hereafter perform or satisfy any such kind of Payment, Contract or Promise, made by any other without my Knowledge or Consent : So help me God, through JESUS CHRIST.”

The Reverse of this Oath is the very Fact, and was the Clerk to swear to that, he would swear to the Truth and nothing but the Truth. “ I have made a Simoniacal Contract, Payment or Promise, for the procuring this Living : My Father or my Friend have done it in my behalf, and I will perform and satisfy this Contract. So help me God.”

What is Preferment? What is a Living, when purchased at the Expence of Honour and Conscience? Can that Man be easy, or enjoy another happy Day? At least, ought not Contrition and the deepest Humiliation for

* Every young Clergyman, who designs buying or to have a Living bought for him, would do well, before he sets about it, to read over and seriously consider this Oath, which he must take at his Institution.

for such an heinous Offence to be his daily Exercise, who has wilfully broken as plain, as strong, and comprehensive an Oath as ever was devised or penned? Shall those Persons, whose Duty it is to teach others the Sacredness and Obligation of an Oath, set an Example of trifling with, evading, and explaining away so solemn an Appeal to a God of Truth and Knowledge? Do they, who have engaged in this illicit Commerce, believe what they preach? Can they have Courage *to reason upon Righteousness and a Judgment to come?* Can they stand and rehearse the Ten Commandments in the Ears of the People, who know themselves to have obtained their Preferment by unrighteous Methods, and have closed the iniquitous Act with *taking God's Name in vain*, in the highest Degree, and with the utmost Deliberation?

I have spoken to this Subject with more Freedom and Satisfaction, being well assured, I could give no Offence to the greater, and most respectable Part of this Reverend Audience. The above Arguments I offer to the Consideration of all who are yet Patrons; to the younger Clergy, and to the rising Generation, that in passing through the Waves of a tempting, and troublesome World, they may steer off, and avoid that Rock, on which many of their Predecessors have made Shipwreck of their Consciences.

And here I might have concluded, but cannot forbear observing, that there is an Evil practised in the State, like, in its Malignity and bad Consequences, to that which is so justly complained of in the Church. As Benefices and Ecclesiastical Preferments, so Towns and Boroughs, Cities and whole Counties, are said to be bought and sold, to gain a Seat in a great Council-Chamber. What a vast Profusion of Wealth is there! What enormous Sums are squandered away on these Occasions, not to serve the least good Purpose, but for opening a Scene of Idleness, Excess and Riot; Noise and Confusion and every evil Work! The vilest Stratagems are used to corrupt and retain Electors, while the Statute against Bribery, enacted by the same Authority to which these Gentlemen aspire, is no more regarded than a Song, or a Shred of Parchment. It is really an affecting Sight, to behold the Populace, who have had large Money given them, again and again, assembled by Troops at the Place of Sale, and pressing forward drunken and disorderly, to take a solemn Oath, "That they have not received any Sum of Money, Gift, or Reward, in order to give their Votes at that Election." No Attention is paid to the Wisdom, or Worthiness, to the Age, or Reputation of the Candidates;

or

or their Fitness to serve in so high a Station; but he is the Man, whose wicked Agents (for so Solomon calls them, *Prov. xvii. 23.*) have been most successful in taking Gifts out of their Bosom, to pervert the Ways of Judgment; to influence others to act contrary to the Dictates of Right and Truth, and their own real Sentiments. The Legislative Powers, sometime ago expressed their Apprehensions [Preamble to the last Act against profane Swearing] “ That the horrid, impious, and execrable Vices of profane
 “ Cursing and Swearing, so highly displeasing to Almighty God, might
 “ justly provoke the Divine Vengeance, and increase the Calamities these
 “ Nations labour under.” How then must our Fears and Apprehensions be heightened, when we behold, with Amazement, the scandalous and general Practice of the grossest Bribery, (which in the Judgment of the old Heathens * presaged Weakness and Dissolution to the Roman Empire) and the Frequency and Multiplicity of Oaths, imposed and taken on all Occasions, and needlessly repeated by Men of all Orders and Degrees, *not as a Confirmation of Truth, or to put an End to Strife*, but in Multitudes, I may say, meerly for Form’s sake, without any Regard to that Name or Presence, which is *Great, Reverend, and Holy*. Thus our Wickedness is grown up to the very Heavens, and the Cry of our Transgressions has reached the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Is it not high time for those who are in Authority to consider on some effectual Method for restraining or removing these Disorders in the Church and in the State, which threaten Judgment, and the Divine Vengeance to both? If they still continue, the Days may come, when the good People of this Land, may sit down, and lament over it with this Lamentation: *For the Sins of the People, and the Iniquities of the Priests; because of giving and taking Bribes; because of Swearing, the Land mourneth.* But may the Vigilance of our Counsellors and Senators prevent this.—And may it please “ our most gracious God, to direct and
 “ prosper all their Consultations to the Advancement of his Glory, the
 “ Good of his Church, the Safety, Honour and Welfare of our Sovereign
 “ and his Kingdoms; that all things may be so ordered and settled by their
 “ Endeavours, upon the best and surest Foundations, that Peace and
 “ Happiness, Truth and Justice, Religion and Piety, may be established
 “ among us for all Generations!” 18 JA 53

And let all, both Clergy and People, say *Amen*.

* “ I could heartily wish, said CAIUS PONTIUS the Samnite, that Fortune had reserved me to those Times, and that it had been my Fate to be then born, when the Romans
 “ shall begin to take Bribes; I should quickly have put an End to their flourishing Empire.”

TULLY’s Offices.

F I N I S.